

Chapter 3 - Conducting a Reduction in Force

Everyone involved in planning and conducting a reduction in force must remember that the process is not a mechanical one. RIF is made up of a number of steps that call for decisions which may not be covered by established procedures and regulations. The use of judgment, common sense, creativity and flexibility are essential as is a caring and positive attitude.

A. Automated RIF Systems.

1. The RIF Manager Program (RMP), sometimes referred to as the RIF Manager, is an interactive automation program designed to perform all of the mechanical processes of the RIF. It will track and record actions and provide the basis for production of management information reports. RMP is currently used by the Army and the Navy. The Air Force also has a microcomputer version that is similar to the RIF Runner.
2. The program uses personnel and position information which is downloaded from a central data base (i.e., NCPDS/ACPERS) and allows for manual adjustment to the data, if necessary. The program includes a variety of desires to "clean-up" the data base prior to running the program.
3. The design of the program allows multiple "iterations" of the RIF (up to 99). Since variables such as positions abolished and use of vacancies can be changed with each "iteration" the program is a powerful tool to use in RIF planning. Results of each "iteration" are clearly documented to allow for easy comparison of the results using different conditions.
4. By having the capability of using multiple iterations, the program also provides the capability of "rerunning" the RIF to accommodate changes to the competitive area such as retirements, resignations, position changes, etc. The start of each interaction is to be saved in a history file. This allows you to track all RIF actions for every employee involved in the RIF through every iteration of the RIF.
5. The program also includes many front-end and clean-up efforts which will save time and reduce the possibility of errors. On the front-end, many standard DESIRES have been developed for use in cleaning up the database before the RIF starts. Checklists of those things which must be verified are also included. The system will produce reports, RIF letters, severance pay computations, reemployment priority lists, repromotion eligible lists, EEO impact reports, annotated retention registers, and a variety of reports.
6. The system automatically identifies placements for Round 1 processing. These can be adjusted as needed with documentation of the reasons. In Round 2 of the RIF, the computer program identifies all possible placement options for a RIF'd employee including vacancies, bumping options, and retreat options which are within the affected employee's three-grade interval range. The personnelist determines qualifications and determines the "best offer" among the possible choices. Seniority Lists, documented retention registers, and a variety of standard reports can be produced at any stage of the RIF processing.

7. Through biweekly downloads, the system will keep track of all changes which have occurred, determine whether the change had any impact on completed placements and advise the Staffing Specialist of those placements which are no longer valid or no longer represent the "most suitable" option for the employee. In an interactive mode, new placements will be made for affected employees.
8. The program is designed to be run by two or three staffing specialists. It is estimated that running a RIF (running the first iteration and printing the first letters) using RIF Runner in a competitive area of 3000 to 5000 employees and 100 to 300 abolish actions will take from two to three weeks. Doing this manually is estimated to take four to five staffing specialists about four to six weeks. The accuracy rate on placements is estimated to be from 20 to 50 percent more accurate using the automated program. This will save even more time on subsequent iterations.

B. Rightsizing and Documentation System (RADS)

1. Another automated RIF system used within Navy is the Rightsizing and Documentation System (RADS), developed by the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, N.H., to reduce the processing time and to increase the accuracy of RIF actions. RADS is an efficient, accurate system which generates the necessary computer capability to store and sort data based on the execution of various management options and qualification determinations made by personnelists.
2. RADS can be executed on a stand-alone PC with a 40-80 megabyte hard drive depending on the size of the RIF. The only software necessary is at least a 3.3 version of DOS. A laser printer is preferred, but any form feed printer is acceptable. This equipment and software can easily run a RIF involving 8,000 employees. However, it is recommended that the stand alone PC be at least a 386 to enhance the processing time.
3. Basic personnel data is input to RADS through download of the centralized data base. Positions are marked for abolishment by inputting the position number only. Relevant position data is already present in the system. If management wishes to use selected vacancies during the RIF, they may be identified from the NCPDS download or entered individually. Once all position abolishments have been identified, and ties within competitive levels have been broken, Round 1 processing may begin.
4. During the Round 1 process, RADS will search through retention registers for the competitive levels of the positions to be abolished and automatically release the employee with the lowest retention standing. RADS recognizes and properly executes such variables as work schedule and type of appointment. Therefore, it is possible to simultaneously run RIFs impacting different categories of positions. For instance, both competitive and excepted service positions may be abolished with RADS limiting the impact of the competitive abolishments to only other competitive positions and the excepted service abolishments to other excepted service positions.
5. As soon as employees released in Round 1 are identified, they are entered in retention standing order into a pool of candidates ready for Round 2 placement. At this point, individual qualification data is captured and input for each employee to be placed. Data capture is accomplished off-line by

personnel specialists and requires approximately 15-20 minutes per employee record; keying in the results requires 3 minutes for each employee record. The computer then sorts through appropriate positions within the data base and identifies placements for impacted employees. The system presents candidates for placement in retention standing order considering the type of appointment, work schedule, tenure group, adjusted service computation date, qualification decisions and bump and retreat rights. It presents as placement options only those positions for which the employee is both qualified (based on retention factors affecting bump and retreat rights) and eligible (based on retention factors affecting bump and retreat rights). As employees are displaced through Round 2 processing, they are entered into the placement pool in retention standing order and in turn placed in accordance with RIF regulations.

6. RADS can be run in either automatic or manual mode. Since qualification data is entered into the system in "best offer" order, in automatic mode the system will select the first match. In manual mode, the personnel specialist has the option to select any of the possible options (i.e., keeping the employee in the same organization).
7. When Round 2 is finished, the next step in the process is the completion of the entitlements module. RADS will identify mandatory entitlements based on the action taken, i.e., change-to-lower grade or separation. As each employee's record is displayed, the system prompts the specialist to input decisions on those entitlements not automatically based on the nature of action alone, e.g., eligibility for retained grade. RADS will retain a record of appropriate entitlements for each employee affected by RIF. The entitlements module interacts with the letter module so that RIF notices automatically list the employee's specific entitlements.
8. RADS provides a series of standardized letters covering all basic RIF actions such as reassignments, change to lower grades, separations, better and worse offers and cancellations. These letters pull identifying information about the employee's current status, RIF nature of action and entitlements from the data base. Any of these letters may be modified to reflect changes in wording or format.
9. The reports module provides basic documentation used to counsel employees, substantiate the action taken during the RIF, and provides information which is necessary to assess the impact of the RIF or compare a variety of different RIF scenarios.
10. Because RIF actions are closely reviewed and frequently result in litigation, a team of attorneys from a major Navy systems command examined the process and outcomes of a live-data test. They found that the RADS determinations of rights and assignments conformed to OPM and DOD regulations in every instance and that the documentation and audit trail was complete and accurate.
11. A step-by-step RADS Users Manual is available for use with the system. The manual begins with a RIF Managers Check List and Directory and outlines in detail RIF preparation, data base clean-up, installing the RADS

program, downloading from the central data base, round 1 and 2 processing, generation of RIF notices and reports, RIF counseling, and post RIF activities.

C. Coverage

The following employees are covered by RIF rules.

1. Those in the executive branch, with modifications, e.g., administrative law judges (FPM Chapter 930. reference (r)).
2. Those in positions outside the executive branch that are subject by statute to competitive service requirements or are determined by the appropriate legislative or judicial administrative body to be covered by this chapter.
3. Excluded from coverage (see reference (e) and (s)) are the following employees.
 - a. Members of the Senior Executive Service (these employees have other retention rights authorized by 5 U.S.C. 3595) (reference (a)).
 - b. Employees who work outside the executive branch, such as for the Congress or Courts, unless their positions are included, by law, under competitive service requirements.
 - c. Employees whose appointments are subject to Congressional confirmation
 - d. National Guard Technicians
 - e. Reemployed Civil Service annuitants unless the agency permits them to be covered.

D. Competitive Area

1. A competitive area is described organizationally, geographically, or both. A small installation may be made up of a single competitive area. A large installation may be divided into several competitive areas. An installation may make its competitive areas as large as it considers appropriate. However, they cannot be smaller than the minimum prescribed by OPM regulations. The competitive areas may be restricted to the local commuting area. Parts of a field installation located beyond commuting distance from other parts may themselves be designated as separate competitive areas (FPM Supplement 351-1, Section 3 (reference (e))).
2. Competitive areas should be in effect at least 90 days prior to a RIF. Prior approval of OPM is required if changes in existing competitive areas are made or new competitive areas are established less than 90 days prior to the effective date of a RIF. Requests for prior approval should be submitted to OPM as early as possible and should include the information described in FPM Supplement 351-1, Section 3 (reference (e)).

E. Competitive Level

1. A competitive level is established based on grade (or occupational level) and classification series. Each competitive level consists of all positions in the competitive area that are so similar in all important aspects that the people who occupy them could exchange positions without serious interruption to work performance requirements. Separate competitive levels are required for positions according to the following categories:
 - a. Competitive service
 - b. Excepted service
 - c. Appointment authority
 - d. Pay schedule
 - e. Type of work schedule
 - f. Supervisory or nonsupervisory status
 - g. Trainee status
2. A competitive level may consist of many positions, a few positions, or only one position. A position that is highly specialized and not interchangeable with any other position in the competitive area would be in a competitive level by itself. Every position in a competitive area in which a RIF will occur must be assigned to a competitive level.

F. Retention Registers

Retention registers are used to determine the retention standing of competing employees under RIF (sample at Figure 3-2). Each agency must establish competitive areas to compete all employees with similar positions within a specified organizational unit(s) and geographical location(s). Competing employees are then placed on a retention register by tenure group; then by veteran preference subgroup within each tenure group; and then by the

number of years of service including performance credit within that subgroup. Each agency must establish procedures and cut-off dates for crediting performance ratings prior to the issuance of specific RIF notices. Changes in tenure or other factors that may affect employee standing must be considered during the notice period. An employee's retention standing is determined as of the date he or she is released from a competitive level only after all possible changes are considered. Competition to remain in a competitive level is called first round competition. Competition for positions in other competitive levels is called second round competition. An employee reached for release from a competitive level may have assignment rights to another occupied or vacant position. This process is known as bump and retreat.

G. Retention Standing

1. The names of all employees in a competitive level are listed on a retention register in the order of their relative retention standing. The relative standing is based on the four factors named in section 3502 of title 5, United States Code(reference (t))
 - a. Tenure of employment
 - b. Military preference (Veterans Preference)
 - c. Length of service
 - d. Performance rating
2. Tenure of employment determines the employee's retention group.
 - a. Career employees are in tenure group I. Supervisory or managerial employees serving a probationary period under FPM chapter 315, subchapter 9, are in tenure group I if otherwise eligible to be included in this group (reference (u)).
 - b. Career-conditional employees and employees serving a probationary period for competitive appointment under FPM Chapter 315 (reference (u)), subchapter 8, are in tenure group II. Supervisory or managerial employees who have not completed a probationary period required by FPM chapter 315.8 are also in this tenure group.
 - c. Employees serving on indefinite appointments, temporary appointments pending establishment of a register (TAPER), term appointments, other nonstatus, nontemporary appointments, and employees in status quo are in tenure group III.
3. Veterans preference determines the employee's subgroup. Within each tenure group, subgroup AD, A, or B is identified. Subgroup AD includes each veterans preference employee who has a compensable service-connected disability of 30 percent or more. Subgroup A includes each preference employee not included in subgroup AD. Nonpreference employees are in subgroup B. Employees who are retired from the armed forces do not receive veterans preference for RIF purposes unless they meet the requirements of FPM Supplement 351-1, Section 3-7 (reference (e)). In each subgroup employees are ranked in the order of their length of service. Employees with the earliest service dates and adjustments for extra-service credit based on performance ratings have the highest retention standing (see figure 3-1).

4. Additional service credit is given for performance based on the average value of the employee's last three (actual or assumed) annual performance ratings received during the three year period prior to the date of issuance of specific RIF notices. (The effective date of a rating is the actual final approval date of the rating). Assumed ratings of "Fully Successful" are used for reduction-in-force purposes in the absence of actual annual ratings. An agency may not issue a retroactive annual performance rating of record if the employee lacks three actual annual performance ratings of record during the three year period. Performance rating values are as follows:
 - a. Exceptional: 20 years each
 - b. Highly Successful: 16 years each
 - c. Fully Successful: 12 years each
 - d. Minimally Successful: 0
 - e. Unacceptable: 0
5. When employees in a competitive level are ranked on the retention register, the descending order of retention shows them in the following order (combining tenure group and subgroup into a retention category), starting at the top:
 - a. Category IAD - career veterans with a disability of 30 percent or more in order of adjusted length of service.
 - b. Category IA - other career veterans.
 - c. Category IB - career nonveterans.
 - d. Category IIAD - veterans with a disability of 30 percent or more and who are on career-conditional or probationary appointments.
 - e. Category IIA - other veterans with career-conditional or probationary appointments.
 - f. Category IIB - nonveterans with career-conditional or probationary appointments.
 - g. Category IIAD - veterans with a disability of 30 percent or more on indefinite, term, TAPER, or other nonstatus, nontemporary appointments, or those in status quo.
 - h. Category IIIA - other veterans with indefinite, term, TAPER, or other nonstatus, nontemporary appointments, or those in status quo.
 - i. Category IIIB - nonveterans with indefinite, term, TAPER, or other nonstatus, nontemporary appointments, or those in status quo.

6. Noncompeting employees do not appear on the retention register with competing employees. They are listed separately and the list is attached to the register. Noncompeting employees must be removed or terminated before any competing employees are released from their competitive level by a RIF action. The following employees do not compete in RIF:
 - a. Employees serving on temporary appointments with specific time limitations;
 - b. Reemployed annuitants serving at the will of the appointing officer;
 - c. Employees with unsatisfactory performance ratings who have been issued decision letters of removal under adverse action procedures (FPM Supplement 351-1, Section 3-9f (reference (e))).

H. Order of Release

1. In the normal order of release from the competitive level, no employees are released unless everyone below them on the retention register is released. This means that everyone in category IIIB must be released before anyone in category IIIA, IIAD or higher categories. Everyone in group III must be released before anyone in group II, and so on, up the register from the bottom. If some, but not all, must be released from a particular category, the ones to go are those with the shortest service. The ones to be retained are those with the longest service, as adjusted by performance ratings.
2. Service credit is figured down to the day, so that a person with 6 years, 10 months, and 3 days of service will stand higher on the register than one with 6 years, 10 months, and 2 days. When two or more employees in the same category have exactly the same amount of service, a tie breaking procedure should be developed for release of employees. The method to be used should be determined and made a matter of record before the RIF takes place.
3. In some circumstances exceptions to the normal order of release from the competitive level may be required or permitted (FPM Supplement 351-1, Section 4-4 (reference (e))) for example:
 - a. Employees with retention priority based on restoration after military service who are within reach for RIF will be temporarily passed over and will not be affected until completion of their statutory retention period. This has the effect of floating them to the top of their category.
 - b. To permit the temporary retention of a lower standing employee on sick leave.
 - c. In instances where the release of an employee would greatly impair the operations of an installation.
4. Employees in group I or group II reached for release from their own competitive levels may not be separated or furloughed if they qualify for

a position in another competitive level that is held by an employee they may displace. The two means by which an employee may displace another employee in a different competitive level are by bumping and retreating. Employees are eligible to bump or retreat only if they have a current annual performance rating of minimally successful or higher. Employees in group III, and employees in groups I or II whose current annual performance rating is unsuccessful do not have bump or retreat rights.

a. Bumping

An employee may displace (bump) (See Figure 3-2) another employee in a lower subgroup in the same tenure group or in a lower tenure group if the second employee holds a position for which the first employee qualifies. An employee must meet OPM standards and qualification requirements, including any minimum education requirements, to bump an employee occupying a different grade or type of position in another competitive level. The employee must also have the capacity, adaptability, and any special skills required to satisfactorily perform the duties and responsibilities of the position without undue disruption of the activity. Every group I and group II employee reached for release must be matched against every continuing position of the same grade, or no more than three grades or grade-intervals lower, that is held by someone with lower retention standing. (See FPM Supplement 351-l, Section 5-7 (reference (e))). When there are positions in different pay systems, such as the General Schedule (GS) and wage system schedules (WG, WL, WS), the employee who is affected must be considered for positions with the same (or lower) representative rate as the position currently held. An employee is entitled to a position of the same grade or with the same representative rate if possible. If the employee must be changed to a lower graded position, it must be to a position that constitutes the least reduction in representative rate.

b. Retreating

Displacement by retreat (See Figure 3-2) means placing an employee in position (or essentially identical position) he/she formerly held. The position need not been held at the current employing activity. Placement by retreating is not allowed if an employee can bump another employee in a lower subgroup. An employee may retreat to a position if:

- (1) The position is the same grade or no more than three grades or three grade-intervals (or equivalent) lower. (Up to five grades lower if released employee is in subgroup AD).
- (2) He or she is still qualified to perform the duties of the position.
- (3) The position is held by someone with a later service date in the same subgroup.
- (4) He or she has longer service than the person holding the position.

- (5) The position is held by an employee with a current annual performance rating no higher than Minimally Successful when the released employee's rating is Minimally Successful.
- (6) When there is no one whom an employee can displace, he or she may be separated or furloughed.

I. Use of Vacancies

1. Vacancies may be used to satisfy bump or retreat rights by assigning the employee to a vacant position in the same competitive area having a representative rate equal to the position to which the employee would be entitled on the basis of bump or retreat rights. The employee's right to the position is determined in the same way as the right to bump or retreat is determined; thus, the vacant position must:
 - a. Be in the same competitive area.
 - b. Be no more than three grades or grade-intervals (or equivalent) below that of the released employee.
 - c. Not be a position to which another employee has retreat rights.
2. Vacancies may be used to place employees in lieu of RIF separation or other RIF actions when it is determined that a tenure group I or II employee has no RIF assignment right, or when the activity chooses to offer a position in lieu of RIF separation or other RIF action. The grade-level limits which apply when placing employees who have bump or retreat rights do not apply when offering an employee a vacancy in lieu of RIF. These voluntary offers are not RIF placements and must be made in accordance with FPM Chapter 335 (reference (i)) if the offered position has more promotion potential than the employee's present position. Offers of vacant positions in lieu of RIF must be made on the basis of subgroup superiority and cannot violate the assignment rights of any other competing employees. These restrictions do not apply to placements in vacant positions which are outside the local commuting area.
3. An activity may waive OPM's qualification standards, except for minimum education requirement, in offering an employee a vacant position as a RIF assignment.

J. Benefits and Entitlements

1. Severance Pay

- a. To be eligible for severance pay, an employee must --
 - (1) Be serving under a qualifying appointment. Qualifying appointment means:
 - (a) A career or career-conditional appointment in the competitive service or the equivalent in the excepted service;
 - (b) An appointment in the senior-level and scientific and professional level under 5 CFR, part 319 (reference (v));

- (c) A career appointment in the Senior Executive Service;
 - (d) An excepted appointment without time limitation, except under Schedule C or under a noncareer executive assignment under 5 CFR, part 305, or an equivalent appointment made for similar purposes;
 - (e) An overseas limited appointment without time limitation;
 - (f) A status quo appointment including one that becomes indefinite when the employee is promoted, demoted or reassigned;
 - (g) A time-limited appointment in the Foreign Service, when the employee was assigned under a statutory authority that carried entitlement to reemployment in the same agency, but this right of reemployment has expired; and
 - (h) A time-limited appointment that takes effect within 3 calendar days after the end of one or more of the qualifying appointments listed above.
- (2) Have completed at least 12 months of continuous service. This requirement is met if, on the date of separation, an employee has held one or more civilian Federal positions over a period of 12 months without a single break in service of more than 3 calendar days.
- (a) The positions held must have been under:
 - 1 One or more qualifying appointments; or
 - 2 One or more nonqualifying temporary appointments that precede the current qualifying appointment.
 - (b) When a break in service that is covered by severance pay interrupts otherwise continuous Federal employment, the entire period is considered continuous service.
 - (c) The period during which an employee receives continuation of pay or compensation for an injury on-the-job is considered continuous Federal service.
- (3) Be removed from Federal Service by involuntary separation
- (b) An employee is not eligible for severance pay if he or she --
 - 1 Is serving under a nonqualifying appointment. Nonqualifying appointment means an appointment with an intermittent work schedule and the following appointments regardless of work schedule:
 - (a) A Presidential appointment;
 - (b) An emergency appointment;

- (c) An excepted appointment under Schedule C or under a noncareer executive assignment under 5 CFR, part 319 (reference (v)); a noncareer appointment in the Senior Executive Service, as defined in 5 USC 3132(a) (reference (w)); or an equivalent appointment made for similar purposes; and
- (d) A time-limited appointment that is not made effective within 3 calendar days after separation from a qualifying appointment, including:
 - 1 A term appointment
 - 2 A TAPER appointment
 - 3 An overseas limited appointment with a time limitation;
 - 4 A limited term or limited emergency appointment in the Senior Executive Service, or an equivalent appointment made for similar purposes; and
 - 5 A limited executive assignment under 5 CFR, part 305, or an equivalent appointment made for similar purposes.
- (2) Declines a reasonable offer. (Note: Under new regulations adopted by OPM, effective 28 March 1990, an offer of employment by a successor contractor under the Commercial Activities (CA) program is not a "reasonable offer" because it is not in the employee's agency. Therefore, employees affected by conversion to contract, if otherwise eligible for severance pay, do not lose their eligibility if they decline a job offer by the contractor or if they go to work for the contractor at any time after their separation).
- (3) Is receiving injury compensation under subchapter I of chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code (reference (x)), unless the compensation is being received concurrently with pay or is the result of someone else's death; or
- (4) Is eligible upon separation for an immediate annuity from a Federal retirement system or from the uniformed services.
- c. The following types of service are creditable for computing an employee's severance pay:
 - (1) All Federal civilian service performed by an employee;
 - (2) Service performed with the United States Postal Service or the Postal Rate Commission; and
 - (3) Military service, including active or inactive training with the National Guard, when performed by an employee who returns to civilian service through the exercise of a restoration right provided by law, Executive Order, or regulation.

- d. The computation of severance pay consists of two elements: a basic severance allowance and an age adjustment allowance.
 - (1) The basic severance allowance is computed on the basis of 1 week's basic compensation at the rate received immediately before separation for each year of civilian service up to and including 10 years; plus 2 weeks basic compensation at such rate for each year of civilian service beyond 10 years for which severance pay has not been received. In computing total years of creditable civilian service, the employee will be credited with each full year and 25 percent of a year for each 3 months of creditable service.
 - (2) The age adjustment allowance is computed on the basis of 10 percent of the total basic severance allowance for each year by which the age of the employee exceeds 40 years at the time of separation. Employees will be credited with 25 percent of a year for each 3 months that their age exceeds 40.

The total severance pay received will not exceed 1 year's pay at the rate received immediately before separation.

- e. If an employee is reemployed by the Federal Government or the municipal government of the District of Columbia in a career or career-conditional appointment before the expiration of the period covered by payments of severance pay, the payments will be discontinued beginning with the date of reemployment. Reemployment in a temporary limited appointment will interrupt or defer severance pay until appointment is terminated.
- f. There is a lifetime 52-week limit on the number of weeks an employee can be entitled to severance pay. Official Personnel Folders of employees eligible for severance pay should be reviewed to determine whether severance pay was previously received.
- g. Sample severance pay computation form is provided at Figure 3-3.

2. Health Benefits

- a. A separated employee who is enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program will receive a SF 2810, Notice of Change in Health Benefits Enrollment. This form indicates that the enrollment is terminated and that the employee will have 31 days from termination of enrollment or 15 days from the date the SF 2810 is signed (whichever allows the most time) to convert to a nongroup contract.
- b. A retiring employee may elect to continue health benefits coverage as an annuitant with no change in benefits and Government contributions. The cost may be deducted from the annuity payments. To continue health benefits coverage, the employee must meet all of the following requirements:
 - (1) Has at least 5 years of creditable service;

- (2) Retired on an immediate annuity (an annuity which begins to accrue no later than 1 month after the date of final separation);
- (3) Has been enrolled (or covered as a family member) in a plan under the Health Benefits Program during;
 - The 5 years of service immediately preceding retirement; or
 - All service since first opportunity to enroll; or
 - All service on or before 31 December 1964.
- (4) The annuity is sufficient to cover the withholding required as the employee's share of the cost of enrollment.

3. Life Insurance

- a. Separated employees who have basic Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) coverage will receive a SF 2819, Notice of Conversion Privilege, or SF 2821, Agency Certification of Insurance Status. These forms explain the right to convert to an individual policy. If an employee wishes to convert, the SF 2821 must be sent to the Office of Federal Employees Group Life Insurance within 31 days after the insurance stops, or within 15 days after notification of the conversion privilege (whichever allows the most time).
- b. Retiring employees will be eligible to continue basic life insurance (not accidental death or dismemberment) if all of the following conditions are met;
 - (1) The employee retires on an immediate annuity (one which begins to accrue no later than 1 month after the date of final separation);
 - (2) There is no conversion to an individual policy when the basic life insurance as an employee would otherwise cease;
 - (3) The employee had been insured under the FEGLI Program for the 5 years of service immediately preceding retirement, or the full periods of service during which the basic life insurance was available, if less than 5 years.

The cost of post-retirement coverage depends upon the level of protection the employee wants to retain after reaching age 65. At the time of retirement the employee will receive a SF 2818, Election of Post-Retirement Basic Life Insurance Coverage, which provides a choice of three levels of coverage. If the employee elects to retain 25 percent of the basic insurance amount after reaching age 65, there is no cost. If he/she elects either 50 percent or 100 percent of the basic insurance amount, the full cost of the additional protection will be deducted from the employee's annuity. The withholdings begin at retirement and continue for life or until the election is canceled.

- c. Retiring employees may also retain optional insurance (not accidental death or dismemberment) if they are eligible to continue basic life insurance. In addition, the optional insurance must have been in force for not less than 5 years preceding retirement; or the full periods of service during which the optional life insurance was available, if less than 5 years. The cost of optional insurance will be deducted from the annuity payment.

K. RIF Notices:

1. Employees affected by RIF are those who are furloughed for more than 30 calendar days, separated, demoted or reassigned to an occupied position by RIF procedures. These affected employees are entitled to a specific written RIF notice at least 60 days prior to a reduction in force action. Agencies may give employees less notice only with the prior approval of OPM.
2. New OPM regulations (FPM Letter 351-26, Appendix A) also permit agencies to issue reduction in force notices to employees more than 90 days prior to a reduction in force action without the prior approval of OPM. The FPM letter also requires that agencies provide specific placement and unemployment insurance information to each employee who receives a RIF notice.
3. Specific RIF notice:
 - a. A specific RIF notice is a written communication from an agency official to an individual employee stating that the employee will be reached for a reduction in force action.
 - b. Appendix A provides detailed information about the contents of specific notices as well as status during the notice period, etc. Figure 3-4 is a sample specific notice. Figure 3-5 provides a checklist for RIF notices.
4. Informational notices :

An agency may also issue an advance informational notice to alert employees that a RIF may be necessary. However, an informational notice does not satisfy an employee's right to a specific RIF notice, nor does an informational notice count toward the mandatory notice period for a specific RIF notice.

L. Documentation Requirements

In addition to the items listed in FPM Supplement 351-1 (reference (e)), the following items should be considered the MINIMUM to be included in documentation files. Other items may be necessary based on the individual RIF/TOF function that occurred.

1. General
 - a. Master retention listing of employees
 - b. Retention registers with final action annotated for each employee
 - c. Chart of representative rates

- d. Lines of promotion documentation
- e. 3x5 cards if RIF manually run
- f. All computer generated documentation if using automated system
- g. Master copy of all attachments to the RIF letters
- h. Back-up for decisions regarding by-passing or not qualified determinations
- i. Data on how positions were identified for deletion
- j. SCD/vet preference/skill coding verification
- k. Master competitive level list
- l. Master competitive area list and documentation on date publicized
- m. List of vacancies
- n. Back-up relating to union negotiations
- o. Special approval for early retirements, shorter RIF notice periods, etc.

2. Individual RIF Folder

- a. RIF letter and all corrections/changes/amendments/cancellations, etc.
- b. All acknowledgements regarding the above
- c. Current PD
- d. Qualification brief/qualification worksheet
- e. Severance pay calculations
- f. Copy of "personal" information if not listed in the body of letter
- g. Physical qualifications determinations
- h. Waiver of qualifications determinations
- i. Security/PRP determinations
- j. Offers of temporary positions
- k. Acceptance/declination statements

3. PPP Folder

- a. DD Form 1817 Program for Stability of Civilian Employment Registration
- b. DD Form 1820 Resume
- c. Placement Offers
- d. Updates/corrections/deletions, etc. to registration
- e. Statement of understanding about PPP, if appropriate
- f. Resume release/removal action

ADJUSTED SERVICE COMPUTATION DATE

NOTE: Month and day omitted for illustration purposes

Date employee started working for installation	1980
Minus 2 years of creditable military experience	-2
	1978
Minus performance rating value	16
Adjusted service computation date	1962

Average last 3 years APA (Annual Performance Appraisal) was calculated as follows:

Outstanding summary rating in 1990	= 20 years service credit
Highly satisfactory in 1989	= 16 years service credit
Satisfactory in 1988	= 12 years service credit
	48 divided by 3 = 16
Performance rating value	16

ADJUSTED SERVICE COMPUTATION DATE TIE BREAKERS

When more than 1 employee had the same adjusted service computation date the following tie breakers may be used to determine which employee has the higher retention status.

- 1 - Higher performance rating value
- 2 - Longest service within competitive area
- 3 - Greater time in grade

Figure 3-1

SAMPLE RETENTION REGISTER

Budget Analyst GS-560-12

Position is in the competitive service. Note: An excepted service retention register would have the same components.

SSN = **Social Security Number**

Name =

Comp Level = Competitive Level

WS = Work Schedule

PP = Pay Plan

SER = **Series**

GR = Grade Level

ADJ SCD = Adjusted Service Computation Date. Service computation date adjusted by the average of last 3 years annual performance appraisals

TENURE GRP = ^{appraisals} Tenure Group

SUB GRP = Sub Group

SSN	Name	Comp Level	WS	PP	Ser	Gr	ADJ SCD	Tenure Group	SUB
	A	0000	F	GS	0560	12	1/1/60	I	AD
	B	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/61	I	AD
	C	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/60	I	A
	D	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/61	I	A
	E	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/60	I	B
	F	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/61	I	B
	G	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/60	II	AD
	H	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/61	II	AD
	I	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/60	II	A
	J	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/61	II	A
	K	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/60	II	B
	L	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/61	II III NONE	B

Figure 3-2

ROUNDS OF COMPETITION

ROUND 1

- Management identifies positions to be abolished
- CPO places all affected employees in retention order
- CPO identifies employees occupying abolished positions

Using the bottom portion of the sample retention register as identified on page 1, we will assume that management has decided to eliminate one GS-12 Management Analyst position. The employee affected is L since there are no group III employees in this competitive level. Employee L will now compete in the second round of competition.

SSN	Name	Comp Level	WS	PP	Ser	Gr	ADJ SCD	Tenure Group	SUB
	G	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/60	II	AD
	H	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/61	II	A
	I	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/60	II	A
	J	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/61	II	A
	K	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/60	II	B
	L	"	"	"	"	"	1/1/61	II	B
								III NONE	

ROUND 2

- CPO identifies all permanent positions the employee has held or is fully qualified to perform within the 3 grade/level limit
- CPO administers bump and retreat rules

BUMPING

BUMPING - An employee's right of assignment to a position occupied by another who is in a lower tenure group, or in a lower sub group within the same tenure group, in another competitive level. The assignment right may result in a reassignment or a change to lower grade. To displace another employee by bumping, the employee must be fully qualified and able to perform the job within a reasonable period of time (normally 90 days). There is no requirement that the employee must have held the position to bump into it.

Tenure	Sub Group				
I	AD	Bumps	I A	Through	III
I	A	Bumps	I B	Through	III
I	B	Bumps	II AD	Through	III
II	AD	Bumps	II A	Through	III
II	A	Bumps	II B	Through	III
II	B	Bumps	III	Through	III
III		Can't Bump - Not a competing employee			

RETREATING

RETREATING - An employee's right of assignment to a position occupied by another employee who is in the same tenure and subgroup but in another competitive level. The displaced employee has less service based on the adjusted service computation date. The assignment right may result in a reassignment or a change to lower grade. To displace another employee by retreating you must have held that position or one essentially identical to it.

Group	Tenure Group	Sub		Tenure Group	Sub Group
I	AD		Retreats to	I	AD
I	A		Retreats to	I	A
I	B		Retreats to	I	B
II	AD		Retreats to	II	AD
II	A		Retreats to	II	A
II	B		Retreats to	II	B
III			Can't Retreat - Not a competing employee		

Employee L is a II B and may be able to displace another II B employee by retreating if the other employee has less service and is occupying a position Employee L once held or is essentially identical to it.

Employees never retreat to a lower tenure or sub-group.

SAMPLE RETREAT

<u>Employee A</u>		<u>Employee B</u>
I A D	Retreats	I A D
1/1/1950 ADJ SCD		1/1/1951 ADJ SCD

Employee A retreats to Employee B's position because employee A has more service (adjusted service computation date) than Employee B.

There are grade level/grade interval limits associated with bumping and retreating. Employees may bump or retreat up to 3 grade levels or 3 grade intervals (5 grade levels or grade intervals if a 30% or more compensably disabled veteran).

The limits are determined by the grade level progression of the position from which the employee is released regardless of how the employee actually progressed to that position. Some positions have a one grade progression, i.e., GS-5/6/7/8; others have a two grade progression, i.e., GS-5/7/9/11; others have a mixed interval grade progression, i.e., GS-5/7/9/11/12.

The difference between successive grades in a one-grade progression occupation is a grade level difference. The difference between successive grades in a two-grade progression is a grade interval difference.

Assume employee L, who was identified during the first round of competition, progressed to the GS-12 grade level as follows: GS-5/7/9/11/12. Based on the above criteria, employee L'S progression is considered a mixed interval progression and his/her bump and retreat limit would be to the GS-07 grade level as follows:

GS-12 = Current Position
GS-11 = 1ST Grade Level
GS-09 = 2ND Grade Interval
GS-07 = 3RD Grade Interval
GS-06 Would exceed his bump/retreat limit

Note: The grade limit of bumping or retreating may include an equivalent wage system job.

ONE GRADE PROGRESSION

GS-11 = Current Position
GS-10 = 1ST Grade Level
GS-09 = 2ND Grade Level
GS-08 = 3RD Grade Level
GS-07 Exceeds limit of
bump/retreat

TWO GRADE PROGRESSION

GS-11 = Current Position
GS-09 = 1ST Grade Interval
GS-07 = 2ND Grade Interval
GS-05 = 3RD Grade Interval
GS-04 = Exceeds limit of
bump/retreat

FWS BUMP AND RETREAT GRADE LIMITS

For positions not covered by the General Schedule there is a "normal line of progression" for each occupation which determines the limit of bumping and retreating.

Example 1.

WG-10 Journey Level	=	Current Position
WG-08 Intermediate Level	=	1ST Grade Level
WG-05 Helper	=	2ND Grade Level
WG-04 Limit of Bump/Retreat	=	3RD Grade Level
WG-03 Exceeds limit of bump/retreat		

Example 2.

WS-10 Foreman	=	Current Position
WG-10 Journeyman	=	1ST Grade Level
WG-08 Intermediate	=	2ND Grade Level
WG-05 Helper	=	3RD Grade Level
WG-04 Exceeds limit of bump/retreat		

Example 3.

WS-14 General Foreman	=	Current Position
WS-10 Foreman	=	1ST Grade Level
WG-10 Journeyman	=	2ND Grade Level
WG-08 Intermediate	=	3RD Grade Level
WG-05 Helper exceeds limit of bump/retreat		

NOTE: The grade limit of bumping or retreating may include an equivalent General Schedule position.

SEVERANCE PAY COMPUTATION

1. NAME:

2. TITLE, SERIES, GRADE AND STEP:

<p>3. AGE:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"><tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">Yrs</td><td style="text-align: center;">Mos</td><td style="text-align: center;">Days</td></tr><tr><td>a. Sep Date</td><td style="text-align: center;">___/___/___</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>b. Date of Birth</td><td style="text-align: center;">___/___/___</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>c. Age on Date (a minus b)</td><td style="text-align: center;">___/___/___</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>		Yrs	Mos	Days	a. Sep Date	___/___/___			b. Date of Birth	___/___/___			c. Age on Date (a minus b)	___/___/___				<p>4. CREDITABLE SERVICE:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"><tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">Yrs</td><td style="text-align: center;">Mos</td><td style="text-align: center;">Days</td></tr><tr><td>a. Sep Date</td><td style="text-align: center;">___/___/___</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>b. Service Computation Date</td><td style="text-align: center;">___/___/___</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>c. Total Service (a minus b)</td><td style="text-align: center;">___/___/___</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>d. Non-creditable Mil Svc</td><td style="text-align: center;">___/___/___</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>e. Total Creditable Svc for Severance Pay (c minus d)</td><td style="text-align: center;">___/___/___</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>		Yrs	Mos	Days	a. Sep Date	___/___/___			b. Service Computation Date	___/___/___			c. Total Service (a minus b)	___/___/___			d. Non-creditable Mil Svc	___/___/___			e. Total Creditable Svc for Severance Pay (c minus d)	___/___/___		
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d. Non-creditable Mil Svc	___/___/___																																									
e. Total Creditable Svc for Severance Pay (c minus d)	___/___/___																																									

5. BASIC WEEKLY COMPENSATION (BWC) (Hourly rate of \$_____ x 40 Hrs): \$_____ (Explain in Remarks section computations involving other than scheduled hourly rates, i.e., night differential, part-time, etc.)

6. BASIC SEVERANCE ALLOWANCE COMPUTATION (BSA) (See Appendix F, Subchapter 7, Book 550, FPM Supp 990-2 for Service Factor):

\$_____	x	_____	=	\$_____
(BWC-Item 5 above)		Service Factor		

7. COMPUTED SEVERANCE PAY FUND:

() Under age 40 (enter BSA - Item 6 above): = \$_____

() Over age 40 (See Appendix F, above references, for age adjustment allowance factor):

\$_____	x	_____	=	\$_____
(BWC-Item 6 above)		Service Factor		

8. MAXIMUM SEVERANCE PAY FUND (52 weeks):

\$_____	x	52 (weeks)	=	\$_____
(BWC-Item 5 above)				

9. SEVERANCE PAY FUND MUST BE REDUCED BY TOTAL NUMBER OF WEEKS SEVERANCE PAY PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED (check Official Personnel Folder -- OPF, and "X" appropriate block below):

() No previous severance payment (Omit Item 10 and complete Items 11 thru 15)

() Previously received severance payment (complete all items below).

Figure 3-3

10. SEVERANCE PAY FUND REDUCTION BASED ON PREVIOUS RECEIPT OF SEVERANCE PAY:

- a. Amount of severance pay previously received as reflected in OPF: \$ _____
- b. Weekly rate that previous severance pay was received as reflected in OPF: \$ _____
- c. Number weeks severance pay previously received (round to 4th decimal).
\$ _____ ÷ \$ _____ = _____
(Item 10a) divided by (Item 10b)
- d. Amount severance pay fund to be reduced:
_____ (weeks) X \$ _____ = \$ _____
(Item 10c) (Item 5)
-

11. SEVERANCE PAY FUND ENTITLEMENT: (Check appropriate block below and enter indicated dollar amount.)

- () No previous severance payments, enter lesser dollar amount of Item 7 or 8: = \$ _____
- () Previously received severance pay as indicated in Item 10. Compute severance pay fund as follows:

\$ _____ minus _____ = \$ _____
(Lesser of Item 7 or 8) (Item 10d)

12. SF 50 REMARK: () Entitled to \$ _____ severance pay fund to be paid at rate of \$ _____ per week over _____ weeks beginning _____.

() Entitled to \$ _____ severance pay fund to be paid at rate of \$ _____ per week over _____ weeks and one week at rate of \$ _____ beginning _____.

13. OTHER REMARKS;

14. DATE:

15. SIGNATURE OF PERSONNEL STAFFING SPECIALIST:

SAMPLE SPECIFIC NOTICE

From:
To:

Subj: SPECIFIC REDUCTION-IN-FORCE NOTICE

Ref: (a) Federal Personnel Manual, Chapter 351
(b) FPM Ltr 351-26 of 5 Dec 1991

Encl: (1) Placement and Reemployment Information Sheet
(2) Reduction-in-Force Placement Acceptance Form

1. I regret to inform you that your name has been reached for reduction-in-force action.

This reduction-in-force is necessary due to a reorganization within the _____ Department. The retention rights of all employees concerned have been carefully checked. The following is provided for your information and action. This constitutes a specific reduction-in-force notice.

2. Retention Preference Information:

Present Position:

Tenure Group and Sub-Group

Type of Service: Competitive

Service Computation Date:

Last Three Performance Evaluations:

Adjusted SCD Using Last Three Performance Ratings:

Competitive Area:

Last Day of Active Duty in Present Position:

Competitive Level:

3. Action to be taken:

____ A. You have been reached for release from your competitive level in accordance with the reduction-in-force procedures prescribed by references (a) and (b) and will be separated effective _____.

____ B. Placement action:

(1) You are offered placement to the position _____

(2) You are offered a Change to Lower Grade to the position of _____

____ C. Personal grade retention: You will retain your current grade, step, and pay/for a period not to exceed two years from the effective date of your demotion. You will be treated as being in the higher grade for future pay raises and benefit purposes.

____ D. Pay retention:

Figure 3-4

_____(1) Upon expiration of your entitlement to personal grade retention you will be entitled to pay retention if your current salary is higher than the top step of the position to which you were demoted. The retained pay will be the same pay you have been receiving except that the retained pay cannot exceed 150% of the top step of the position to which demoted. As long as your pay is higher than the top step of the position to which demoted, you will receive only 50 percent of comparability increases for the top step of the position in which demoted. Your pay retention will continue indefinitely until your salary catches up to your retained rate of pay, unless terminated by a break in service of one day or more, demotion for cause, request for change to lower grade or declination of offer of a comparable position.

_____(2) You are entitled to pay retention if your current salary is higher than the top step of the position to which you were demoted. The retained pay will be the same pay you have been receiving except that the retained pay cannot exceed 150% of the top step of the position to which demoted. As long as your pay is higher than the top step of the position to which demoted, you will receive only 50 percent of comparability increases for the top step of the position in which demoted. Your pay retention will continue indefinitely until your salary catches up to your retained rate of pay, unless terminated by a break in service of one day or more, demotion for cause, request for change to lower grade or declination of offer of a comparable position.

_____E. If you accept this offer, please sign and return enclosure (2) to this office within five (5) days of receipt of this notice. If you do not accept, you will be separated effective (Date).

4. You may resign at any time after receipt of this notice. In such case, the customary advance notice required for resignation will be waived. Your resignation may be effective on the date you specify or on the separation date described in this notice, whichever is earlier. Since you are a (Group III employee) (you are/are not) eligible to have your name placed on the Reemployment Priority List and to participate in the Department of Defense Priority Placement Program and the OPM Displaced Employee Program.

5. Annual leave to your credit will be paid in a lump sum.

6. (Name), Room # _____, Telephone _____ is available to assist you by explaining this proposed action and will provide access to pertinent regulations, reduction in force registers and other material you may wish to review which is related to this notice. If, after examination of the register and pertinent regulations, you feel that any of your rights have been violated, you may appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), (Address) in writing anytime during the 20-day

period beginning with the day after the effective date of the reduction-in-force action. A copy of the MSPB regulation is attached.

OR

(as a member of a bargaining unit covered by a negotiated grievance procedure, you may file a grievance under Article _____ of the negotiated agreement within _____ days of the effective date of the reduction-in-force).

7. The action described above should not be considered as reflecting upon your performance or conduct. It is being taken solely for the reasons stated. The services you have rendered toward the accomplishment of our mission are sincerely appreciated.

CHECKLIST - RIF NOTICES (GROUP I AND II EMPLOYEES)

Required information for notices resulting from reduction-in-force actions (select appropriate items for type of action involved):

- A. Specific action (separation; change to lower grade; reassignment; etc.) that is proposed.
- B. Reasons for the reduction-in-force (e.g., reduction in manpower authorizations, reorganization, etc.). A statement that the action affecting the employee is due to application of reduction-in-force procedures.
- C. Title, grade and salary of current official position (include retained grade and pay, if appropriate).
- D. Description of competitive area.
- E. Competitive level (including title or title of positions covered or code or symbol to identify retention register).
- F. Retention subgroup.
- G. Service computation date.
- H. Annual performance ratings received during the last 3 years.
- I. The position title, grade, salary, and location of any position offered to the employee, or the reason why no offer can be made.
- J. Reasons, if applicable, for retaining a lower standing employee.
- K. Effective date of proposed action. Does the specific notice provide a full 60 days in duty status? (Do not count the date the employee receives notice in the 60-day advance notice period). The 60th day may not fall on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.
- L. Last day of active duty in current position.
- M. Option of employees scheduled for separation to request a 30-day extension to Notice period in annual leave or leave without pay status. In addition, if an agency can not retain employees in an active duty status and the employee refuses consent to be placed in an annual leave or LWOP status, you must inform them that they will be placed in a non-pay or annual leave status in accordance with FPM 351-26, 12/5/91, Sect. 7-6B only as a furlough action.
- N. Accessibility to employee of retention registers, reduction-in-force regulations and records, and when, how, and where the employee may inspect them.
- O. Name and location of civilian personnel specialist to contact for counseling.
- P. Appeal and grievance rights. Show how, where and time frame within which the employee may appeal the action or file a grievance under

Figure 3-5

negotiated grievance procedure, as appropriate. A copy of the Merit Systems Protection Board regulations must accompany the RIF letter.

- Q. Disposition of annual leave accumulation.
- R. Grade and pay retention information:
 - 1. Eligible employees -- give grade, rate of pay, and duration of retention.
 - 2. Employee ineligible for grade retention -- give reasons why employee is not entitled (give employee information on pay retention, if applicable).
- S. Severance pay eligibility.
- T. Additional information concerning eligibility of Group I and II employees scheduled for separation for priority placement consideration under the following programs:
 - 1. Reemployment Priority List
 - 2. DoD Priority Placement Program
 - 3. OPM Displaced Employee Program
- U. Affect of resignation or election of discontinued service retirement on employees's eligibility for DoD Priority Placement Program and the OPM Displaced Employee Program.
- V. Expression of appreciation for service rendered by employee.
- W. Enclosures. Acceptance or declination of offer form, methods for calculating severance pay or retirement annuity, supplemental information on grade/pay retention, MSPB regulations, Unemployment Insurance Benefits through State government, etc.